



Fiscal Year 2008 Activities Report: 1 October 2007–30 September 2008



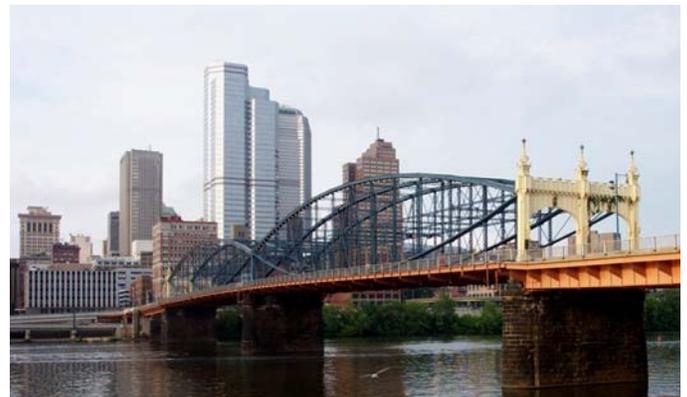
Milestones

In the past fiscal year, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail network grew extensively, reflecting the perseverance and dedication of volunteers, staff of government agencies and non-profit organizations, elected officials and business interests over many years. Regional Directors for the National Capital Region, National Park Service, based on applications from local and regional agencies, consultations and many letters of support, formally recognized six additional segments of the Trail—a total of 310 miles. Adding substantially to the diversity of the network, approximately 258 miles of the new segments are useable, including all or portions of the following:



- ♦ a six-mile hiking trail within the Seneca Tract properties in northern Fairfax County, managed by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority;
- ♦ a 10-mile existing/planned route in southern Fairfax County, managed by the Fairfax County Park Authority, Virginia Dept. of Transportation and Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority;
- ♦ two existing/planned routes in the District of Columbia—the Fort Circle Parks Trail (primarily hiking) and a Capital Monuments Trail (multi-use);
- ♦ the Southern Maryland Potomac Heritage Trail On-Road Bicycling Route (in Charles and St. Mary’s counties); and
- ♦ the Northern Neck Heritage Trail Bicycling Route Network.

In addition to the above, staff of U.S. Army Garrison Fort Belvoir, through a base management planning process and discussions with local volunteers and Fairfax County officials and staff, have included a multi-use PHNST route in the management plan for the post.



Although many gaps still exist, the Trail network reflects the ideas embodied in the 1974 feasibility study to establish connections for non-motorized travel through five physiographic provinces between the mouth of the Potomac River and the Allegheny Highlands. As of late September 2008, the Trail network is comprised of 830 miles on land, including approximately 84 miles of “gaps,” with the potential to recognize approximately 240 additional miles of land trails and numerous opportunities for water trails. A revision of the Trail brochure, scheduled for printing in early 2009, will reflect the new Trail segments.

Other milestones associated with Trail segments include:

- ♦ completion of a “wayside exhibit plan” by NPS and partners in the Piedmont Virginia portion of the Trail corridor, including a system for graphic identity, route marking and interpretation of local sites;
- ♦ incorporation of the Trail into the *Virginia Outdoors Plan* as one of six trunkline trails in the Commonwealth;
- ♦ inclusion of the Great Allegheny Passage as a signature project of “Pittsburgh 250,” a celebration of the city’s anniversary, to complete the trail between McKeesport and the Forks of the Ohio at Point State Park;
- ♦ formal dedication of the Trail segment in Riverbend Park during the Potomac Heritage Trailfest, organized by Glenn Gillis and other Potomac Heritage Trail Association volunteers; and
- ♦ dedication at the Occoquan River Festival of Trail routes in southern Fairfax County and in a portion of Prince William County.

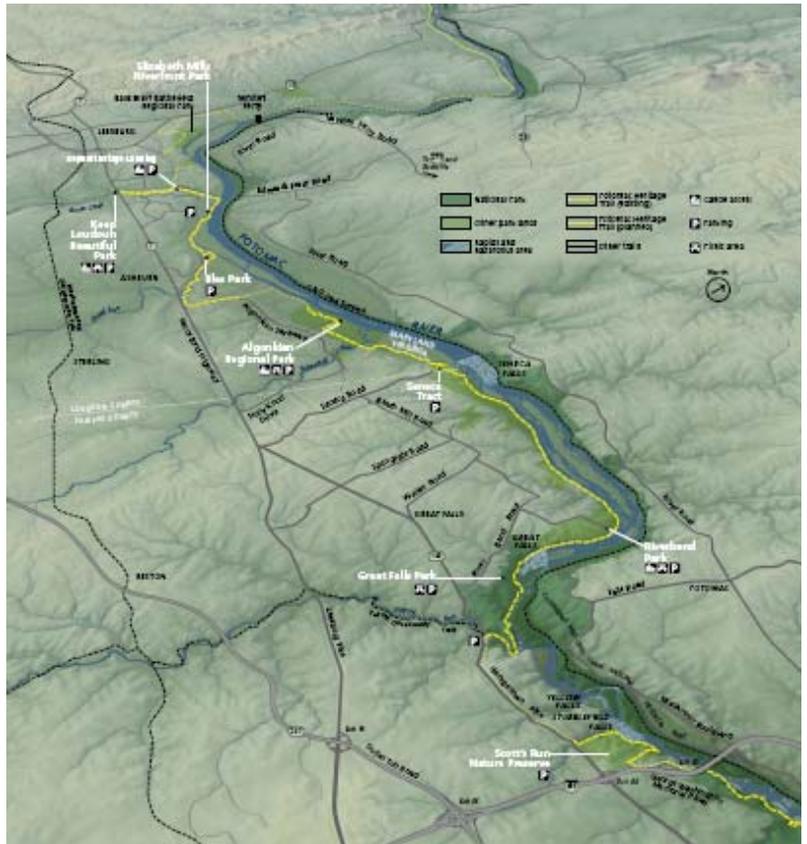
Connecting People and Places throughout the Trail Network

Graphic identity and other interpretive techniques have been, and continue to be, a priority for demonstrating the connections between local resources and the national significance of the Trail corridor. Two projects over the past year illustrate this kind of activity:

- ♦ completion—with substantial contributions of time by local agency staff and volunteers—of cartography, content and designs for trailhead exhibits in the Piedmont Virginia Trail corridor between the American Legion Bridge/I-495 (n. terminus Potomac Heritage Trail, George Washington Memorial Parkway) and Keep Loudoun Beautiful Park on Goose Creek; and
- ♦ consultations with Regional Trail Corporation volunteers and staff on a draft phase II wayside exhibit plan and on incorporation of Trail identity into a sign manual for use by all stakeholders along the Great Allegheny Passage.

Other projects include:

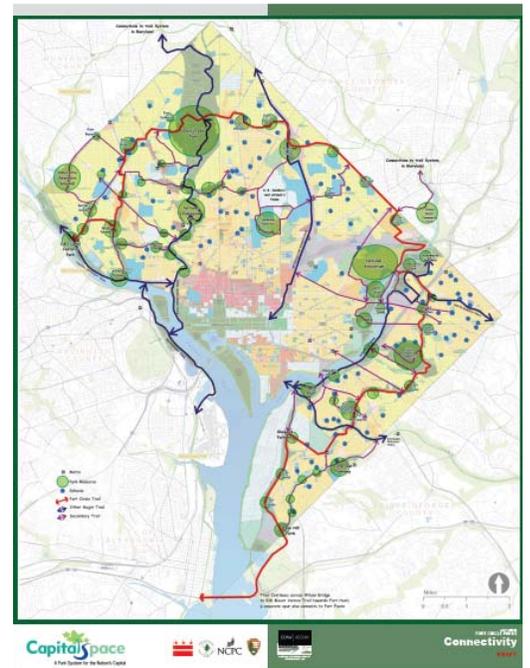
- ♦ a new trail map for and design of a wayside exhibit explaining establishment Scotts Run Nature Preserve (Fairfax County, Vir.);
- ♦ a map of showing two Trail segments in Stafford County, Vir.;
- ♦ revisions to the Prince William Forest Park map to show Trail routes for hiking and bicycling;
- ♦ Trail Powerpoint presentations for Maryland and Virginia conferences and a national water trails conference;
- ♦ narratives on the Trail network for a Greater Washington National Parks handbook being published by Eastern National and for an article in *American Hiker*;
- ♦ a request to Eastern National for production and sales of Trail pins, patches and medallions; and
- ♦ participation in:
 - the 2008 Northern Neck RiverRide;
 - the 2008 Maryland Preservation and Revitalization Conference;
 - the Occoquan River Festival, with formal Trail dedications in Occoquan Regional Park (s. Fairfax segment) and at Belmont Bay (Belmont Bay - Leesylvania S.P. segment);
 - a Partnership for the National Trails System workshop;
 - the Potomac Heritage Trailfest at Riverbend Park, coordinated by volunteer Glenn Gillis and other volunteers with the Potomac Heritage Trail Association and partner organization; and
 - an Accokeek Foundation workshop on interpretation of Native America experiences in the vicinity of Piscataway Park.



Communications, Coordination & Project Assistance:

Activities over the past year included:

- ♦ distribution of three activities reports;
- ♦ planning for a Trail-wide workshop on 13 November 2008 at Algonkian Regional Park;
- ♦ evaluating trail conditions in Oxon Cove Park and connections to planned facilities along D.C. road rights-of-way;
- ♦ facilitating connections between staff of the Student Conservation Association and the Fairfax County Park Authority to work on Trail projects in Scotts Run Nature Preserve;
- ♦ nominating Fort Circle Parks Greenway as a “Regional Conservation Priority,” a form of recognition sponsored by the Washington Smart Growth Alliance;
- ♦ reviewing potential Fort Circle Parks Trail alignments in Rock Creek Park and facilitating discussions on connecting and interpreting the Fort Circle Parks;
- ♦ reviewing status of projects using FY06 high-priority transportation funds;
- ♦ recording GPS data for trails in northern Virginia;
- ♦ completing design of a brochure about Government Island for Stafford County, Vir.;
- ♦ completing questionnaire on trail needs and management in Maryland;
- ♦ completing survey on gaps in the Trail network within Pennsylvania; and
- ♦ drafting a “gap analysis” of the Trail network in Virginia for review at the October 2008 Governor’s Conference.



Budget

FY08 Operations funds (ONPS): **\$273,600**

- ♦ personnel (Trail Office, Harpers Ferry Center, contracting, RTCA project assistance) **\$163,760**
- ♦ travel, office overhead, direct contractual services **\$ 29,840**
- ♦ cooperative agreements: **\$ 80,000**

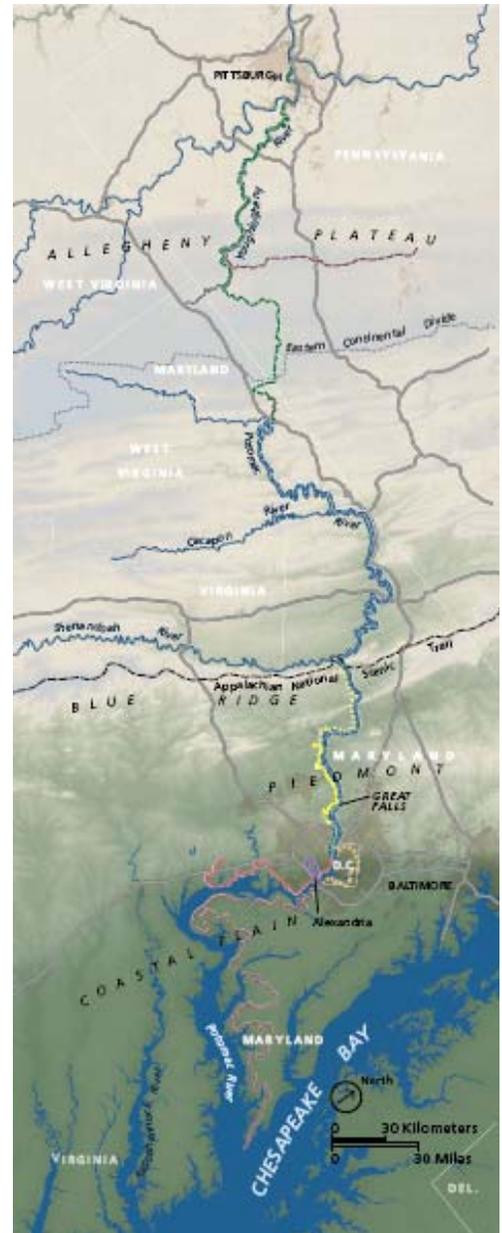
FY08 Challenge Cost-Share Program funds: \$ 30,000

- ♦ establish and promote a Potomac Heritage Trail “marketing alliance” (cooperative agreement w/C&O Canal Trust, Inc.)

Administration

And not to be forgotten:

- ♦ moved office from Lower Town Harpers Ferry to Camp Hill (Harpers Ferry);
- ♦ revised all requests for operations, planning and project funds and applied for Youth Partnerships Program funds, Connect Trails to Parks Program funds and National Park Foundation funds;
- ♦ consulted on and edited six applications seeking recognition of trails as Trail segments;
- ♦ executed new/amended formal agreements with:
 - the Fairfax County Park Authority to help complete an archeological study at the proposed location of a bridge over Clark's Run in Riverbend Park
 - Regional Trail Corporation to complete a sign manual and to provide presentations on "Trail Towns," a community economic development program of The Progress Fund
 - Garrett County Chamber of Commerce (Md.), on behalf of Garrett Trails, to evaluate opportunities for Trail routes and connections to the Great Allegheny Passage
 - C&O Canal Trust to participate in and act as a fiscal agent for a Potomac Heritage Trail marketing alliance, publish Trail itineraries, conduct a media familiarization tour, and co-sponsor events
 - Bikewalk Virginia to assist with 2008 Northern Neck RiverRide and to consult with Loudoun County interests on a similar venture; and
 - Cultural Tourism DC to evaluate possible connects between the Fort Circle Parks Trail and DC Neighborhood Heritage Trails;
- ♦ completed FY07 annual report and others (e.g., interpretation, performance, National Trails System, project management, etc.);
- ♦ secured assistance on exhibit planning, design and cartography from staff in the Harpers Ferry Center, NPS;
- ♦ coordinated Trail project assistance from Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program staff, Northeast Region, NPS;
- ♦ commented on:
 - draft proposals to amend Trail authorizing legislation;
 - a transportation plan in Prince Georges County, Md.;
 - a sign plan for the City of Alexandria; and
 - use of funds from a Dept. of Defense regional land conservation program;
- ♦ received archival materials from Thurston Griggs, one of the first active volunteers and proponents of the Trail;
- ♦ supervised Program Leader for Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, National Capital Region
- ♦ completed mandatory training; and
- ♦ initiated review of interpretive project priorities (with assistance from staff in National Capital Region office).



More Information:

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19 September 2008